

Veterans Corner  
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## AGENT ORANGE DISEASES

Approximately 86,000 Vietnam war veterans, surviving spouses and estates expected to benefit from a VA decision to add three new diseases presumed to Agent Orange: Ischemic Heart, Parkinson's, chronic B-cell blood cancers, and hairy cell leukemia. There are now 14 presumptive diseases caused by Agent Orange. This projection cost to the VA is significant, 13.6 billion this year and 42.2 billion over the next 10 years. Veterans will need to prove they set foot on land (boots on ground) in Vietnam during the War. The sailors that served aboard ship off the coast are ineligible, but there are certain ships that were in-land waters that are eligible. VA expects the claims for presumptive Agent Orange diseases to go up this year to 159,000 and to exceed 270,000 by 2019. Eligible veterans and surviving spouses should file a claim with a state or county veteran's agency.

## Retirement

I will be officially retired as of May 28, 2010 with a total of 35 years in the NYS retirement system. It is time for me to step aside and let a younger veteran take the role. I started this monthly column in 1989 as an outreach to veterans and families and it has exceeded any expectations.

I want to thank the Board of Supervisors and David Wickerham for all their support that they have given me over the last 22 years, without their support I could not have accomplished so much. I know that they will continue to support veterans the programs that I have implemented.

I would also like to thank Barbara Lombardo for giving us the opportunity to publish my column.